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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000709

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/2018

TAGS: PREL PGOV CY TU

SUBJECT: TURKEY: UN USYG PASCOE CONSULTS MFA ON CYPRUS PROPOSAL

REF: A. ANKARA 481

1B. ANKARA 439

1C. ATHENS 367

Classified By: Acting PolCouns Kelly Deganan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: Following consultations in Nicosia and Athens, UN Under Secretary General for Political Affairs Pascoe visited Ankara April 8 to discuss the UN's proposal for the next round of comprehensive Cyprus settlement talks. MFA sources report the GOT is pleased with the details Pascoe laid out in meetings with FM Babacan and MFA Under Secretary Apakan, who underscored the importance of comprehensive UN involvement and the need for a general negotiations timeline up front. In addition, Apakan emphasized Cypriot President Christofias and "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) President" Talat must conduct the final negotiations in order to reach a politically sustainable agreement. In a brief follow-on meeting with UK Ambassador Nick Baird, Pascoe reportedly discussed the impact of the closure case against Turkey's ruling party on the GOT's ability to throw its political weight behind the Cyprus process. Baird and Pascoe also talked about identifying possible (constructive) roles for P-5 members France and Russia. End Summary.

12. (C) UN Under Secretary General Pascoe previewed his proposal for the comprehensive settlement talks in Cyprus with FM Babacan and MFA U/S Apakan during his April 8 trip to Ankara. MFA Cyprus Department Head Can Oztas told us Pascoe briefed Babacan in general terms on his recent Nicosia and Athens meetings and explained the UN proposal. With U/S Apakan, however, he delved into greater detail. Oztas reported Apakan emphasized the GOT wants the UN involved in the entire process, noting "Without the UN, there will be no structure." Apakan also underscored the need to establish a general schedule outlining the time and place for each phase of the talks before beginning negotiations. Unlike "TRNC" leader Talat's declaration that negotiations should be concluded by the end of 2008, Apakan reportedly told Pascoe that Turkey's timeline is "more flexible." According to Oztas, Pascoe estimated the negotiations phase could be concluded in roughly a year with a summer 2008 start date.

13. (C) Pascoe told GOT interlocutors that the Greek Cypriots have agreed to use the Annan Plan as a basis of negotiation, but will not publicly announce it, reported Oztas. Pascoe envisions working groups would meet for three months to review and "check off" technical aspects previously agreed

upon in roughly 7,000 pages of the Annan Plan. Once the three month period concluded, the working groups would not meet again. An additional 2,000 pages reflect undisputed standing agreements related to Cyprus from the 1960's onward, and according to Oztas, Pascoe told GOT officials he did not expect these to be controversial. The remaining 200 pages, including issues like securities and guarantees, would require full negotiations. Apakan underscored the importance of Cypriot President Christofias and "TRNC President" Talat, endowed with the full authority of their legislatures, personally conducting those talks in order to reach a successful and sustainable agreement.

¶4. (C) Pascoe met briefly with UK Ambassador Nick Baird before departing Ankara, according to UK Embassy contacts. Pascoe told Baird his meetings with GOT officials were general, but positive; the Turks made the right noises. The two primarily discussed the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) closure case and its impact on Prime Minister Erdogan's ability to throw his political weight behind resolving the Cyprus issue. The two leaders also talked about possible (constructive) roles for P-5 members France, primarily, and Russia.

¶5. (C) Oztas noted that while the GOT will support whatever the "TRNC" finds acceptable, Turkey's redlines remain unchanged. All parties must uphold the Treaty of Guarantee and Alliance. In addition, the final settlement must be based on bi-zonal, political equality of the two sides, and equal status of the two constituent states that will form a new federation. Oztas reported the GOT has, thus far, seen no real change in the Greek Cypriots, position on the settlement plan other than Christofias says he would to

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negotiate in contrast to former Cypriot President Papadopoulos' refusal to talk. Talat wants to see deeds and not talk, according to Oztas. He added although Talat and Christofias were "comrades in arms" in support of a settlement, Talat still carries a sense that he was betrayed by Christofias following the latter's 2004 decision to oppose the Annan Plan after saying he intended to support it.

¶6. (C) The GOT has established a policy to refrain from making public comments that could prejudice the negotiations process, stated Oztas, a step Pascoe acknowledged during his meetings with Babacan and Apakan. Oztas emphasized CHOD Buyukanit's April statement that Turkish troops would remain on the island until "a just and permanent peace is established" was taken out of context by the press. Buyukanit, claimed Oztas, was referring to the 650 Turkish troops afforded by the Guarantee and Alliance Treaty. Erdogan, visiting Sweden at the time, quickly clarified that Turkish troops would begin withdrawal as soon as an agreement was signed. Oztas added Turkish Land Forces Commander GEN Basbug's previously scheduled April visit to Cyprus unfortunately came on the heels of Buyukanit's impromptu trip, giving the impression that the Turkish military was attempting to influence the process.

¶7. (C) Oztas called the incident that led to the temporary closing of the Ledra Street crossing as "unfortunate." When an unruly group approached the crossing, the "TRNC" police stepped outside their guard posts to investigate. Viewing the troops' movement as a hostile act, the group left and shortly returned with anti-Turkish banners. The police then denied passage. He cited media speculation that Papadopoulos, who opposed opening Ledra Street, may have orchestrated the demonstration to occur while Christofias was in London. Oztas reported the issue now seems to be resolved.

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